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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1112  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1814  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0773  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC 1296  
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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: ALMATY NOTES, JUNE 29 - JULY 12

¶1. The "Almaty Notes" series from U.S. Office Almaty focuses on developments in civil society, the media, and the political opposition in Kazakhstan's "southern capital."

TUYAKBAY APPEALS TO NAZARBAYEV

¶2. On July 1, opposition National Social Democratic Party leader Zharmakhan Tuyakbay addressed an open letter to President Nazarbayev to express his concern about how the government's anti-corruption campaign is being conducted. Tuyakbay maintains that it is a selective campaign which aims to create "an atmosphere of fear" -- just as during the Stalinist repressions of the 1930s. (COMMENT: This is a gross exaggeration by any standard. The repressions of the 1930s were marked by the arrest and murder of several million people; Kazakhstan's anti-corruption campaign has resulted in the arrest of a small -- though growing -- number of government officials. END COMMENT.) In his letter, Tuyakbay cited several recent cases of concern, including the prosecution of opposition leaders Bulat Abilov, Asylbek Kozhakhmetov, and Tolen Tokhtasynov; the arrests of senior officials at state nuclear company Kazatomprom; and the ongoing trial of journalist Ramazan Yesergepov. Tuyakbay stressed that in the last two cases, the lawyers of the accused were not permitted to see and defend their clients. He called on Nazarbayev to curb illegal practices in the law enforcement system.

ALMATY FACTORY WORKERS STRIKE

¶3. On June 30, approximately 2,000 workers from the Almaty Railroad Car Repair Factory went on strike. The workers' complaints included low wages, constant delays in salary payments, and difficult work conditions. They addressed a letter to Prime Minister Masimov demanding the factory's nationalization. Their request to hold a protest rally on Almaty's outskirts was denied by the city administration. The National Social Democratic Party announced its solidarity with the workers.

¶4. Opposition journalist Yermurat Bapi claimed that the strike did not actually result from socio-economic problems at the factory, but rather was instigated by powerful business clans who seek the dismissal Askar Mamin, head of the national railway company, Kazakhstan Temirzholy. On July 4, the workers suspended the strike "because many problems, including wage arrears have been resolved."

KAZAKHSTAN-2012 MOVEMENT

¶5. On July 4, about 100 activists from the Kazakhstan-2012 movement

-- which unites "dolshiki" (i.e., Kazakhstanis who invested money in apartments that have not been completed) and individuals with burdensome mortgages -- held a protest at the entrance to Almaty's Saudakent market. The police and market security guards blocked the entrance and refused to let the activists in. The activists thus conducted their rally outdoors. Workers from the Almaty Railroad Car Repair Factory came to the protest to express their solidarity.

#### CONSTRUCTION COMPANY MANAGERS CONVICTED

16. In Almaty, the top managers of the BC-Group construction company have been brought to justice for embezzling money private citizens invested into building new apartments. The company's director was sentenced to 12 years in jail and its other top officials to various terms in prison ranging from 7 to 11 years.

HOAGLAND